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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON **EMOR** - 5769

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Tonight, the evening of Friday, May 8, will be day 30, which is 4 weeks and 2 days of the omer.

From TorahWeb.org <torahweb@torahweb.org> to weeklydt@torahweb2.org date Thu, May 7, 2009 at 8:28 AM subject Rabbi Hershel Schachter - Lechem Hapanim , Shemiras Shabbos, and Parnassah http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2009/parsha/rsch_emor.html

Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Lechem Hapanim, Shemiras Shabbos, and Parnassah

In the days of the Beis Hamikdash, every erev Shabbos twelve challas would be baked in a special shape ("lechem hapanim") and would be placed on the Shulchan in the Heichal on Shabbos morning. These challas would sit on the Shulchan all week long, and would be removed the next Shabbos morning when the newly baked lechem hapanim would replace them. The kohanim had a mitzvah to eat the removed challas each week on Shabbos and on the night of motsaei Shabbos until midnight. Miraculously, the challas tasted delicious as if freshly baked.

The Talmud (Menachos 94b) records two views regarding the required special shape of these challas. One opinion is that they were in the shape of a canoe, pointed at both ends and wider in the middle, and the other view is that they were shaped like a rectangular carton. The Chazon Ish writes that both are correct and that either shape would have been acceptable.

On Shabbos when we recite the beracha of hamotzi at the beginning of each meal, the minhag is that we use challas either in the shape of a canoe or in the shape of a carton. This minhag is based on a passage in the Zohar which states that the challas on Shabbos should remind us of the twelve challas which were placed on the Shulchan every Shabbos. On Yom Tov, when the challas used for hamotzi are not reminiscent of the lechem hapanim, many have the custom to use round challas indicating that these challas are only to reminisce about the miraculous double portion of mohn that fell every erev Yom Tov, and not having any connection with the lechem hapanim.

Based on this passage from the Zohar, many have the practice to have twelve challas on the table when reciting hamotzi over only two. Others have the practice of cutting both challas of the three meals of Shabbos, adding up to a total of twelve half challas to remind us of the twelve lechem hapanim.

On Shabbos when we don't go to work or earn any money it is especially important to remind ourselves of both miracles - the mohn and the lechem hapanim. The mohn was referred to in the Chumash as "lechem min hashomayim - food from heaven." Each family would measure how much mohn was brought home each day, and despite the fact that some collected much more than they need and some collected much less than their family needed, it would miraculously turn out that each family ended up with exactly the amount they needed for all members of the family. We believe in hashgacha pratis, especially in the area of parnassah. The Talmud (Taanis 2A) states that parnassah is one of the areas that Hashem does not delegate to malachim, i.e. to nature. He takes care of each person's parnassah individually. One who believes that his parnassah is determined in heaven will not feel the need to violate Shabbos to earn more, nor to encroach on someone else's parnassah in an inappropriate manner. Our motto is that in heaven records are kept of each individual, and "everyone will receive what is due him, and no one can even touch anything that was intended for another person" (see Yuma 38b).

The miracle of lechem hapanim extends throughout all generations. The food we eat on Shabbos is very tasty even though it was not cooked or baked that day. Just as the mitzvah of the lechem hapanim served as a segulah for parnassah for Klal Yisroel (see Netziv), so too our observance of Shabbos not only will not diminish our parnassah, but will enhance it. The miracles of lechem hapanim and the mohn have followed shomrei Shabbos throughout all generations.

In the Shabbos zemiros we allude to the statement in the Talmud (Beitzah 15b) that if one can't afford to buy special delicacies for Shabbos, he should borrow money from others and can safely rely on Hashem that He will see to it that he will be able to repay the loan. Proper observance of Shabbos will not diminish our parnassah.

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from Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org> Thu, May 7, 2009 at 12:05 AM subject Rabbi Frand on Parshas Emor

Rabbi Frand on Parshas Emor

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape #635, Bracha of Mekadaish Es Shimcha B'rabim. Good Shabbos!

Two Dimensions In The Measure of Man

The following idea comes from the Sefer Tiferes Torah by Rav Shimshon Pinkus, ob"m.

The Torah teaches us that the Kohen Gadol, unlike a regular Kohen, does not leave the Bais HaMikdash [Temple] when he has suffered the loss of an immediate family member. He continues doing the Avodah [Temple Service] even while having the halachic status of an onen.

The Rambam writes [Hilchos Klei HaMikdash 5:7] "In the Beis HaMikdash they constructed a special room / office for the Kohen Gadol. It was part of his honor and glory to spend the entire day in the Bais HaMikdash, leaving only to go home at night." In other words, even if the Kohen Gadol was not engaged in performing the Service of the Bais HaMikdash, he was not supposed to leave the premises the entire day. Inasmuch as sitting in the Bais HaMikdash Courtyard is prohibited and we would not expect the Kohen Gadol to remain on his feet 12-16 hours a day,

he would typically retire to his office on the premises where he could be seated.

The Rambam further writes that the Kohen Gadol's home should be in Yerushalayim [Jerusalem] and he should not move from there. Thus, not only was the Kohen Gadol confined to his office the entire day, he was confined to Yerushalayim for the rest of his life. When one takes the job of Kohen Gadol, he might as well cancel his frequent flier accounts!

There is something called prison and there is something else called house-arrest. In effect, this halacha tells us that the Kohen Gadol – of all people – is under house arrest. He must stay in the Bais HaMikdash most of the day except to go to sleep at night and he is not allowed to leave Yerushalayim! This is not an easy requirement.

When Dovid HaMelech [King David] was on his death bed, he instructed Shlomo [Solomon] regarding Shimei ben Geirah, who had cursed the king bitterly when Dovid HaMelech fled for his life from his son Avshalom. Dovid had promised Shimei that he would not personally harm him, but on his death bed he advised Shlomo to "take care of him" such that he not die a regular death. However, out of respect of the promise he made Shimei, Dovid advised Shlomo to use his own wisdom and not just go out and execute him.

Shlomo sent for Shimei and ordered him not to leave Yerushalayim. He warned Shimei that if he should cross the Valley of Kidron, he was sentencing himself to death. Shimei gratefully accepted this deal. But three years later, a couple of Shimei's slaves ran away. Shimei left Yerushalayim to chase after the slaves. Shlomo caught him leaving and had him executed.

In discussing this incident, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz asks how Shlomo knew that Shimei was going to leave Yerushalayim. His father ordered him not to let Shimei die a natural death. In the end he fulfilled his father's command. But why was he so confident that his trap would work?

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz answers that Shlomo knew human nature. When some one is told "This is where you have to stay and you can not leave for the rest of your life!" just as sure as the sun will rise tomorrow, that fellow is going to leave.

Now if this is the case, how is it that the Kohen Gadol does not go out of his mind as a result of the restrictions placed upon him? How is he able to accept the restrictions placed on his movements – which were even more restrictive than the arrangement Shlomo made with Shimei ben Geirah?

The Tiferes Torah addresses this question by giving a brilliant insight into a Gemara in Tractate Chagiga (12a). Human nature is such that people like to travel and see new places. I myself am like that. Baltimore Maryland is a very nice place but after awhile, 365 days a year, it can get to you. People want to see other places – perhaps Delaware! People after all have a natural desire to travel.

Where does this yearning come from? The Gemara in Chagiga states that Adam's height reached "from one end of the world to the other end of the world". This needs to be understood allegorically, but at least in some sense the first man encompassed the entire world. This means that somehow Adam initially grasped the entire world, however when he sinned G-d compressed him. The Tiferes Torah interprets this Agaddah to mean that each individual innately has a relationship with the entire world – the Atlantic and the Pacific and the Mediterranean, the mountains and the valleys, the whole world! Therefore, each person has within him the drive and the curiosity to re-experience and revisit the entire world from one end to the other.

Another opinion in that same Gemara states that Adam's height was from the ground to the heavens. Not only did he encompass the entire world but he went from the earth until the heaven. The Talmud concludes that both opinions refer to the same measure (idi v'idi chad shiura hu).

The Tiferes Torah interprets the Gemara's conclusion to mean that both measurements cannot coexist in the same human being. Either it is from one end of the earth to the other or it is from earth to heaven, but not both! The Tiferes Torah interprets the measure "from earth to heaven" as meaning that just as Adam related to the entire geography of the world, he

related to all of its spirituality. Every single iota of ruchniyus [spirituality] that exists from this earth, all the way to the heavens, man also possesses. However, these two dimensions of man cannot flourish simultaneously. It is an "either / or" situation. The more one satisfies one dimension, the more he loses the other dimension.

This means that a person who can get his satisfaction from that dimension of Adam, which reaches from earth to heaven, will fulfill his natural inquisitiveness and curiosity with that dimension of his personality alone. But if that dimension does not satisfy him, then the other part of his curiosity takes over – the urge to travel from one end of the earth to the other.

When Shimi ben Geira was confined to sit in Yerushalayim for the rest of his life, he was destined to go out of his mind. He was not exclusively involved in spiritual matters, so it went against his natural inclination to see more of the world. But a completely spiritual person, whose curiosity works in the vertical dimension (from earth to heaven), can satisfy his wanderlust in spirituality, rather than in travel.

That is why for the Kohen Gadol, it was no challenge to sit in the Beis Hamikdash and in Yerushalayim his whole life. Spirituality was such an important facet in the life of the Kohen Gadol that he was able to satisfy his innate curiosity with spiritual search rather than with geographical travel.

This write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah Portion.

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Parshas Emor: **Rav Chaim Kanievsky - Rus, Boaz, And Naomi Make An Appearance In Middle Of The Parsha**

Parshas Emor discusses the Yomim Tovim starting with Pesach and going chronologically through the year until Succos. At the end of pasukim discussing Shavuos and the Korban Shtei HaLechem the torah tells of the mitzva of leaving the Pei'a and Leket of the field to the poor. Not only is this out of place but it was already written in Parshas Kedoshim.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky says that the torah is hinting to us about Rus who collected Leket from Boaz's field. Rus first came to his field in the season when they were cutting the barley, which is this time of year. Some even say they were cutting for the Korban Omer which is discussed in the preceding pasukim.

Rav Chaim points out that the pasuk says (Emor 23:22), "LeAni V'LaGer Ta'azov", taking the word V'LaGer, the last letter of the preceding word, and the first letter of the subsequent word, it spells Giyores, alluding to Rus. Additionally the word Ta'azov has the letters of Boaz in it. The extra letter "Tuf" together with the first and last letters of "V'LaGer" is the word Rus. The gematria of the words "LeAni V'LaGer Ta'azov Osam" is equal to "Zu Naomi V'Rus HaMoavia Kalasa", this is Naomi and Rus the Moavi her daughter-in-law.

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Section: Parshas HaShavua Category: Quick Vort

Parshas Emor: **Rav Meir Shapiro - How Many Stones Does It Take To Kill Someone?**

When they took out the son of Shlomis Bas Divri out to be stoned for cursing the Shem Hashem it says (Emor 24:23), "Vayirgimu Oso Even",

they stoned him with one stone. In Parshas Shlach (15:36) by the Mikoshesh, when they took out the person who was Michalel Shabbos it says, "Vayirgimu Oso Avanim", they used more than one stone. What accounts for this difference?

Rav Meir Shapiro answers that the Mikoshesh according to the gemara (Shabbos 96b) was the great tzaddik Tzelafchad. He was Michalel Shabbos to teach Bnei Yisroel a lesson, and was willing to die to be MiKadesh Shem Shamayim.

When they had to kill Tzelafchad, the tzaddikim did it with a heavy heart knowing what a tzaddik he was. They were devastated that they were forced to take this action. The Resha'im however were filled with thoughts of sweet revenge. Here was this supposedly great tzaddik who always made himself look pious, yet they finally found out that secretly he was a Rasha no better than them. When Tzelafchad was killed two totally different kinds of stones were thrown by these two groups. When they took out the blasphemer to be killed, everybody threw the stones with the same intention and all their stones were considered one.

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from **Rabbi Josh Flug** <yutorah@yutorah.org> reply-to: yutorah@yutorah.org to internetparshasheet@gmail.com date Thu, May 7, 2009 at 1:31 PM subject B'Mesilat HaHalacha #7 - The Prohibition against Sorcery

The Prohibition against Sorcery

There are numerous verses in the Torah that prohibit the use of sorcery and other forms of magic. Rambam (Maimonides 1135-1204), Introduction to Hilchot Avodat Kochavim, lists eleven negative commandments that relate to sorcery and witchcraft. The details of these prohibitions are listed in the Gemara, Sanhedrin 65a-b and in Rambam, Hilchot Avodat Kochavim chapter 11. In this issue, we will discuss two approaches to understanding the Torah's prohibitions against sorcery and the practical difference between these two approaches.

The Two Approaches

Rambam, Hilchot Avodat Kochavim 11:16, states emphatically that the powers that sorcerers claim to have do not exist. He further states that anyone who believes that these powers exist, but the Torah nevertheless prohibited partaking of them, "lacks intellect." Ramban (Nachmanides 1194-1270), Devarim 18:13, Rabbeinu Nissim (c. 1320-1380), Derashot HaRan no. 4 and R. Yosef Ibn Chabib (14th-15th century) Nimmukei Yosef, Sanhedrin 16b, s.v. Tanu Rabanan, all disagree with Rambam and assume that such powers do exist in the world and the Torah nevertheless prohibited partaking of them.

The dispute as to whether such powers exist carries over to the codifiers of Jewish law. R. Yosef Karo (1488-1575), Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 179:6, codifies Rambam's opinion that these powers do not exist. The Vilna Gaon (1720-1797) vehemently disagrees. He notes that although Rambam does not believe that these powers exist, all of the authorities that followed Rambam disagree and do believe that these powers exist. He then suggests that Rambam was influenced by "the philosophers" and therefore, he was forced to assume a non-literal interpretation of verses in the Torah and statements in the Talmud. The Vilna Gaon asserts that these episodes are to be understood literally, but not on a superficial level, rather through in-depth analysis.

Practical Differences between the Approaches

There are a number of practical differences between the two approaches. First, Ramban, Teshuvot HaMeyuchasot no. 283, writes that one practical

difference is whether it is permissible to base one's actions on knowledge of the supernatural. He posits that if one consults an astrologer, he violates the positive commandment of being a tamim (a simple person, based on the verse in Devarim 18:13 "tamim tihyeh im HaShem Elokecha," you shall be simple with the Lord). However, the prohibition against consulting astrologers only applies if one actively seeks information from them. If someone has knowledge of astrology or knows of advice given by astrologers, it is permissible to base one's action on that information. Ramban notes that Rambam disagrees. Rambam, Hilchot Avodat Kochavim 11:9, writes that it is prohibited to base one's actions on astrology or other fortune tellers. Ramban writes that the reason why Rambam prohibits basing one's actions on astrologers is that Rambam is of the opinion that these powers do not exist. However, if one assumes that they do exist, the prohibition is limited to seeking out their information and not to acting upon information that one already knows. [Almost all of the Teshuvot HaMeyuchasot LaRamban were actually written by Rashba. This is one of the few responsa written by Ramban.]

The dispute between Rambam and Ramban may play a role in enumerating the 613 mitzvot. Ramban, Hashmatot, Mitzvat Aseh no. 8, questions why Rambam omits the mitzvah of being a tamim from his list of mitzvot. R. Aharon Y. Grossman, V'Darashta VChakarta Vol. III, pg. 488, explains that Rambam and Ramban are consistent with their opinions. Ramban is of the opinion that these powers do not exist. Therefore, the prohibition against consulting an astrologer is not the consultation per se, but rather the action based on his advice. For this reason, Rambam, Hilchot Avodat Kochavim 11:16, presents the verse of "tamim tihyeh" as a general warning against all forms of sorcery. As such, there is no specific mitzvah of being a tamim and it does not warrant being counted in the list of mitzvot. Ramban, who is of the opinion that these powers exist, understands that the verse prohibits consulting people who have knowledge of these powers. The prohibition is seeking the knowledge and not acting on that knowledge. Therefore, this prohibition differs from the other prohibitions relating to sorcery and warrants being counted as a separate mitzvah.

Second, R. Shlomo Luria (1510-1574), Yam Shel Shlomo, Chullin 8:13, discusses whether a person in a life-threatening situation can consult a sorcerer for a cure. He suggests that in theory, the question should be contingent on the two approaches. According to Rambam, there is absolutely no purpose in seeking counsel from a sorcerer and therefore, it is prohibited to violate Torah law. According to the other Rishonim, it is permissible to violate Torah law for (almost) all prohibitions and this prohibition is included. R. Luria concludes that perhaps Rambam will agree that it is permissible in a life-threatening situation because there is always a small possibility that the sorcerer may find a cure.

R. Ya'akov of Karlin (d. 1855), Mishkenot Ya'akov, Yoreh De'ah no. 41, presents a different analysis of whether it is permissible to seek treatment from a sorcerer for a life-threatening situation. He notes that there are two issues in seeking treatment from the sorcerer. The first is that one is causing the sorcerer to violate a prohibition of sorcery. Regarding whether this prohibition applies in a life-threatening situation, Mishkenot Ya'akov posits that it is dependent on a dispute in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 56b) as to whether non-Jews must observe the laws of sorcery. If one assumes that they are required to observe these laws, one must conclude that sorcery is considered a form of idol worship. If one assumes that they are not required to observe these laws, sorcery is not a form of idol worship. If sorcery is a form of idol worship, one may not violate the prohibition against sorcery in a life-threatening situation. If it is an independent prohibition, one may violate the prohibition in a life-threatening situation. The second issue is that the "patient" violates the prohibition of "tamim tihyeh." Mishkenot Ya'akov writes that there are sufficient grounds to be lenient in a life-threatening situation (alluding to R. Luria's analysis). However, he writes that while one can justify seeking treatment from a sorcerer, he would not recommend doing so.

Performing Magic Tricks

Rambam, Hilchot Avodat Kochavim 11:9 and 11:15, writes that it is prohibited to perform acts that appear magical even though there is no actual magic involved. Rambam, Sefer HaMitzvot no. 32, specifically includes acts of sleight of hand in this prohibition.

R. David ben Zimra (15th-16th century), Teshuvot HaRadva'az no. 1,695, suggests that Rambam is simply following his own opinion that these powers don't exist and therefore, sleight of hand must be included in the prohibition. However, all of the Rishonim who disagree with Rambam permit acts of sleight of hand that appear magical as long as they are not being used to trick people.

R. Avraham Danzig (1748-1820), Chochmat Adam 89:6, rules that acts that appear to be magical are prohibited, even if they are acts of sleight of hand. R. Ovadia Yosef (b. 1920), Yechaveh Da'at 3:68, accepts Chochmat Adam's opinion as normative. R. Yekutiel Y. Halberstam (1905-1994), Divrei Yatziv, Yoreh De'ah 1:57, adopts the position of Radva'az that tricks of sleight of hand are permissible. He further suggests that if everyone knows that there are no supernatural forces involved, it is permissible according to all opinions. R. Betza'el Stern, B'Tzel HaChochma 4:13, rules that even those who prohibit acts of sleight of hand only prohibit acts of optical illusions. If someone performs acts of sleight of hand by switching two items while the audience is not looking or other similar acts, it is permissible, even according to Chochmat Adam.

B'Mesillat HaHalacha, authored by Rabbi Josh Flug, is a project of Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future- South Florida Initiative, where Rabbi Flug serves as a senior scholar. Please visit www.cjll.org to learn more. The Marcos and Adina Katz www.yutorah.org is a project of Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future. If you would like to subscribe to this series click [here](#). Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future 500 W 185th St. New York, New York 10033

from Heritage House <innernet@gmail.com> innernet@innernet.org.il
Tue, Jan 20, 2009 at 2:51 AM subject

InnerNet - "Mourning the Loss"

Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski is scion of a chassidic dynasty. He is also a psychiatrist and founder of the Gateway Rehabilitation Center in Pittsburgh, a leading program for substance abuse. Here, he answers readers' questions on the topic of death and mourning.

QUESTION: I was at a shivah call where you were present, and I heard you discourage the wife of the deceased from taking tranquilizers. I don't understand that. Is it really a mitzvah to suffer when one can get relief?

ANSWER: No, there is no mitzvah to suffer if one can get safe relief. The key word is "safe."

In general, pain does not provide healing. It is different with grief, which, while very distressing, is important in healing.

When someone has lost a loved one, the survivor must deal with the reality of the loss and be able to go on with life. Failure to grieve the loss prevents the necessary adjustment to the new reality. If the grief is in any way averted, it may show up at a much later time as "unresolved grief," which can be very disruptive, and is difficult to treat.

Tranquilizers may be used very briefly. However, it should be remembered that tranquilizers are a medicine, and medicine should be used only when there is illness. Grief is not an illness. It is a normal feeling. Grief requires empathy and support, but does not require "treatment." Furthermore, frequent use of tranquilizers can result in a dangerous addiction.

The laws of mourning prescribed by Judaism help a person to grieve constructively.

Some people have misguided ideas. When I practiced as a rabbi and officiated at a funeral, it was often difficult to get the family members to remain at the cemetery until the burial was completed, and then say

Kaddish, as Jewish law requires. Some people would urge having the family leave before the actual burial, to "spare them the pain."

Judaism is not cruel. Presence at the burial is a component of accepting the difficult reality that the loved one is gone, so that the survivors can make the adjustment to the new reality. Refusing to accept reality stands in the way of readjusting to life.

Judaism does not approve of a quilted coffin. It is ridiculous to think that the deceased can be made more comfortable. A "more comfortable" coffin is really a refusal to accept the reality of death. It is sometimes hypocritical when children who were not properly attentive to their parents during their lifetime suddenly become devoted and spend huge amounts of money on an ornate coffin because "we want to give Mom the best."

There is a safe use for tranquilizers, but they should not be used in an attempt to avoid acceptance of a difficult reality.

* * *

WHEN SOMEONE HAS LOST A CHILD

QUESTION: I know there is a mitzvah of comforting mourners, and usually I have no difficulty making a shivah call. People may talk about the person who died and share memories, or they may talk about many other things.

But recently I had the terrible experience of making a shivah call to a friend who lost a child. The child had suddenly taken ill and was rushed to the hospital, but the doctors could not save her.

My friend was completely broken, crying continually. Sometimes she would shake her head and say, "But why?" They are a God-fearing family. There is no reason to believe that they deserved so harsh a punishment. One person said, "Who knows what kind of suffering awaited this child had she grown up? This may have been God's kindness."

To me this sounded stupid. But what does one say in such a situation?

ANSWER: Judaism says that when one makes a shivah call, one should remain silent until the mourner initiates conversation. The Book of Job describes how Job was stricken with horrible disasters, losing everything he had, and worst of all, his children. Three friends came to console him, and seeing his profound suffering, tried to answer his question, "But why?" by giving him arguments to justify God. All their arguments did was agitate him rather than comfort him. They did better the first seven days when they were silent.

The question of "why bad things happen to good people" is unanswerable. According to one opinion in the Talmud, Moses posed this question to G-d and was told that this is a secret that one cannot understand as long as one inhabits a physical body. Moses said, "God is perfect; all His ways are just" (Deuteronomy 32:4), but does not try to explain why this is just. This is a matter of faith, not logical understanding.

In the tragic situation you encountered, there is really nothing that one can say. However, the stricken person should be made to feel that she is not alone, that others feel her pain and care for her. You can do this by just being there. Sometimes it is better to stay for a brief period of time and come back again.

If your friend wanted to talk, whether about her child or about what she feels was an injustice, what you should do is listen. She has a need to talk and cannot talk to a wall. She needs to talk to another human being who will listen. Don't try to give answers that even Moses did not know. You might say, "Is there anything I can do for you?" She may ask you to pick something up for her, or whatever else she may need.

At the end of the Book of Job (42:7), G-d is angry with Job's friends, who, instead of comforting him, made him feel worse.

People who survived the Holocaust suffered tragedies akin to Job. Many were able to maintain their belief in G-d despite the horrors they experienced, but no sensible person tries to explain it.

I made a shivah call to a family that had lost a child. When I entered, the room was full of family, but gradually everyone left, and the mother tearfully poured out her aching heart to me. Each time I visited, the same thing occurred. I listened, but there was nothing I could say.

Several days later the young woman's father called to thank me for helping her. Helping her? I hadn't said a word. What happened was that everyone else in the family could not bear her crying, and they tried to divert her to something else. I was the only one who listened, and that was helpful.

Do not minimize the importance of just being there and sharing the person's pain. There is a saying that "a sorrow that is shared is halved." I doubt that this is true. Sharing the pain does not reduce it by 50 percent. But there is nothing worse for the suffering person than to feel alone.

Some people have told me that in such situations they stay away because they feel so awkward, not having any comforting words to say. That is a mistake. A person in grief feels worse when isolated.

So just be there for someone. You don't have to say anything. The Sages prescribed the words, "May G-d comfort you," because only G-d can provide consolation. All we can do is let the mourner know that we care.

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ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

INTRODUCTION TO PARASHAT HASHAVUA

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PARASHOT EMOR

TIME, SPACE, AND THE SHAVOUT BRIDGE

By Rabbi Yaakov Beasley

A. Introduction

"Mo'ed." This word is so central in the Torah, yet it is hard to find the appropriate English equivalent; "appointment," "contact," or "meeting" will have to suffice. For the past ten parshiot, beginning in Parshat Teruma in Sefer Shemot, the emphasis of the Torah has been on the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, resting upon the Ohel Mo'ed. For chapters on end, we have discussed the construction and creation of sacred space, both temporarily in the desert and for future reference in Shiloh and in Yerushalayim. Last week, we noted how Sefer Vayikra suddenly and abruptly changes focus from the Mishkan and its service to how the Jewish people are to function as the bearers of Hashem's name in their dealings in the outside world. Our parsha returns to discuss the holiness of the kohanim, not as they function within the confines of the Mishkan, but rather among their peers in the most mundane and human of activities – marriage and mourning. The parsha then discusses the various holidays. Instead of sacred space, the Jewish people must learn to construct sacred time – the "mo'adim" (holidays).

B. THE SHABBAT-SHAVOUT CONNECTION

The constructive role of the Jewish people in causing holiness and time to coalesce appears almost at the beginning of the parsha:

These are the mo'adim of Hashem, the sacred occasions which you shall proclaim, each at its appointed time... (23:4)

Proclaim – whether you do so correctly or incorrectly – these are the only mo'adim that Hashem will recognize! [Being contingent on the beit din's approval – Rashi] (Rosh Ha-Shanah 25a)

The Torah then goes on to describe the dates, determined by the proclamation of the new moon, of each of the holidays:

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month ... (23:5)

On the fifteenth day of the month ... (23:8)

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month ... (23:24)

Just on the tenth day of this seventh month ... (23:27)

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month ... (23:34)

The imperative to proclaim the holidays appears almost at the beginning of the parsha – but not quite. Commencing the list of holidays is Shabbat. Separate and yet connected, Shabbat differs from the rest of the list as there is no need for the vagaries of astronomical dating that afflict the others:

Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: The fixed times of God, which you shall proclaim as sacred occasions, these are my fixed times. On six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a Shabbat of complete rest, a sacred occasion. You shall do no work; it shall be a Shabbat of G-d throughout your settlements.

These are the set times of God, the sacred occasions, which you shall celebrate each at its appointed time: In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a Passover offering to God... (23:5)

The first point that we notice in this section is that it actually begins twice. After the first heading – "Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: the fixed times of God, which you shall proclaim as sacred occasions, these are my fixed times" – only the command about Shabbat follows. Afterwards, the initial opening is repeated, almost word for word – "These are the set times of God, the sacred occasions, which you shall celebrate each at its appointed time" – serving as the opening title for the list of the rest of the holidays. The second introduction isolates Shabbat from the rest of the holidays, but it also implies a connection that we must still determine.

The introductory heading for the holidays reads: "These are the set times of God, the sacred occasions, which you shall celebrate each at its appointed time." To be called "sacred occasions," they must be observed in their proper times ("be-mo'adam"). There is a set day for the celebration of every holiday; once that specific date arrives on the calendar, we must declare it a sacred occasion. The calendar, however, is a human invention; beit din proclaims the beginning of each month and sets the date anew with every sighting of the new moon. Even if beit din were to err, they invest the day with holiness and sanctity, as noted in the gemara cited above.

The introductory heading for Shabbat, however, does not include the term "in their time" or "in its time." Man does not define or control Shabbat. No court declares when Shabbat takes place. Instead, we read: "On six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a Shabbat of complete rest, a sacred occasion." Unlike the holiday dates, set in relation to the natural astronomical world, there is a counting independent of the seasons or the revolutions around the sun. From the days of creation, every seventh day is holy; it does not matter what date the seventh day of the week falls out on.[1] This reflects a consciousness of time disconnected from the physical world.

Through this disconnection from the natural world, Israel testifies that G-d created the world. This method of counting presents an alternative to the seasonal, natural reality, which testifies that the world has existed forever. Not so, proclaims Shabbat! This world was created ex-nihilo, from nothing, through the word of God. By keeping Shabbat weekly, we testify to that reality.

C. The Meaning of Shavuot

In truth, it is not entirely accurate to say that all holidays are bound by astronomical determinations – all are, except one. One mo'ed shares the Shabbat's disregard of astronomy. Having no fixed point in the sky, its holiness derives from the grains of the earth, the counting of the harvests from barley to wheat:

Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving to you and you reap its

harvest, you shall bring the first omer of your harvest to the priest. He shall elevate the omer before Hashem for acceptance on your behalf; the priest shall elevate it on the day after the Shabbat... And from the day on which you bring the omer of elevation offering - the day after the Shabbat - you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete; you must count until the day after the seventh week, fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to Hashem. You shall bring from your settlement two loaves of bread as an elevation offering; each shall be made of two-tenths of a measure of choice flour, baked after leavening, as first fruits to Hashem... On that same day, you shall hold a celebration; it shall be a sacred occasion for you; you shall not work at your occupations. This is a law for all time in all your settlements throughout the ages. (Vayikra 23:9-11, 15-17, 21)

How can we explain the similarities between Shabbat and Shavuot? In many ways, it is a holiday like the others; the same rules apply – only "melechets avoda" is forbidden, unlike Shabbat. It receives its holiness from the declaration of the people: "On the fiftieth day." Yet, it is not tied to a specific date on the calendar[2] or the proclamation of the court: "Shavuot falls sometimes on the fifth, sometimes on the sixth, and sometimes on the seventh [of Sivan]" (Rosh Ha-Shanah 6b). Instead, it begins where the Shabbat left off – "And the priest shall elevate it on the day after the Shabbat ... You shall count on the morrow after the Shabbat, when you bring the omer offering." Shabbat is defined by the cycle of seven, and Shavuot is seven cycles of seven.

Apparently, Shavuot, like Shabbat, is beyond the natural cycle and is not determined by nature. On the other hand, the unique preparatory period leading up to Shavuot is connected to the natural seasonal cycle of the harvest. Clearly, then, Shavuot bridges the two worlds that are starkly differentiated at the beginning of the chapter. What could possibly connect between the supernatural Divine world of Shabbat, residing above nature, with the daily grind to earn the bread of humanity on earth? Only Shavuot – the date when we receive the Torah.

[1] To fully appreciate the difference between the natural cycle of seasons and the weekly cycle, consider the following: Should a person lose their way in the desert, they would, after some time, be able to determine the date and whether it was winter, summer, spring or fall, and act accordingly. However, once the day of the week is forgotten, to astronomically recreate it is impossible (see Shabbat 69b for the practical ramifications of this quandary).

[2] The Ba'al Ha-Turim (Rabbeinu Yaakov ben Asher, 1270-1340, of Germany and then Spain) views this quality as a purely technical reason:

There are those who explain that the reason for the counting of the omer is that [the days of the omer] are the days of harvesting and the people are busy [working in the fields] and are not in their homes. They could therefore not be reached by the messengers of the courts to be informed when the new month begins. G-d therefore commanded us to count the days.

We are suggesting a different approach in our study.

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PARSHAS EMOR

And they shall not desecrate My holy Name. (22:2) We are living through difficult economic times. While these times pose challenges even for the strong of character, they are especially trying for those whose rectitude leaves much to be desired.

People stoop to extremely low levels of decency in order to make ends meet, often at the expense of others and even of their service to Hashem. What should our attitude be towards a co-religionist who has acted in an unsavory manner, who has taken advantage of the unsuspecting nature of others and betrayed their trust? What about the one who has blatantly stolen

from others? How should we view his reprehensible act against his fellow man? And how should we react to his desecration of Hashem's Name?

Clearly, this is a controversial question which is likely to elicit a variety of responses - mostly negative. Let us take a moment to see how a gadol b'Yisrael, Torah giant, who was considered by some to be a kanai, zealot, reacted. Horav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zl, was very concerned about chillul Hashem. He went out of his way to protect the honor of Hashem - even at times when the culprit deserved serious punishment. If it would result in a desecration of Heaven, he would do anything to avert it. Once, a certain Orthodox figure who was involved in chareidi public affairs was accused of wrong doing. The rumors began to fly; the accusations were leveled at the entire Orthodox community. Rav Yosef Chaim stood by this man's side, defending him vigorously. When he was asked why he did so, Rav Yosef Chaim explained, "Whenever an offense is committed by a person who represents the frum, observant, community, we have two alternatives in terms of our response to his action. We must consider the wrongful act itself- and the resultant chillul Hashem - which might be even worse than the sin per se. By standing at this man's side, I can minimize to some extent the gravity of the chillul Hashem which this episode has produced.

Rav Yosef Chaim was insistent that a Jew who had perpetrated a crime against the Jewish community should not be handed over to the authorities, due to the consequent chillul Hashem. In addition, causing a fellow Jew to be incarcerated is in itself a criminal act against Hashem. In the case of a Jew who had stolen a Sefer Torah from a shul, he advised the concerned parties to inform the thief that they were aware of his misdeed, in the hope that it would suffice in deterring him from any other acts of corruption. Within a few days, the Sefer Torah found its way back to the shul from which it was taken.

Rav Yosef Chaim would often go to extreme lengths to defend those Jews who, given the hardships of the times, had strayed from the path of Torah observance. I may add that this concept also applies to those who seem to differentiate in their observance between areas governing man's relationship with Hashem and his relationship with his fellow man. One who cheats others but observes Shabbos and kashrus is still not Torah observant. We have no dichotomy in serving Hashem; all of the mitzvos are part of the same Torah. Nonetheless, Rav Yosef Chaim would always try to think of justifications and sources of merit for any Jewish person, regardless of his religious affiliation or level of observance.

When some of his close confidants would chide him, expressing their surprise about the rav's overly sympathetic tolerance towards Jews who were clearly what one would define as "wicked," he would give the following validation for his attitude: "When a person sins, he should be pitied - not scorned. In the Talmud Sotah 3A, Chazal teach that one does not sin unless he has been previously overcome by a spirit of madness. Is there anyone more insane than a person who ignores all of the good that Hashem does for him and intentionally rebels against Him? Is he different from a person who suffers from an emotional disturbance? Now, when we meet someone who is mentally incapacitated, we act toward him with kindness and compassion. How much more so should we be sympathetic toward someone who has abandoned the path that leads to spiritual happiness and eternal life!"

Rav Yosef Chaim did, however, distinguish between the person who has sinned on an individual basis whereby he hurt only himself and the individual whose actions have engendered a chillul Hashem. The latter must be fought tirelessly and vehemently repudiated, lest others fall prey to his deleterious behavior. Any transgression that carries negative ramifications for the Jewish community's spiritual welfare can quickly lead to the most devastating results. This has sadly been proven time and again throughout history.

Hashem's appointed festivals that you are to designate as holy convocations these are My appointed festivals. (23:2)

Mikra'ai kodesh, holy convocations: the festivals are more than a time to gather together amid joy and celebration; they are holy times during which, as the Ramban explains, Hashem "calls" us, inviting us to assemble in prayer and thanksgiving, to celebrate with family, bedecked in finery and sharing in festive meals. The words mikra'ai kodesh denote two concepts which we should never forget because they define the essence of Jewish festivals: Mikra'ai - Hashem calls/invites us; kodesh - holy. The festivals are days of holy calling when we come together with Hashem to become spiritually elevated, to focus on the many opportunities available to us for reaching higher and doing more. How different are our festivals from those of our counterparts.

The term "festival" is seemingly inconsistent with a halachah cited in the Tur Orach Chaim 559. The Tur rules that on Tisha B'Av we do not recite Tachanun, the special supplication after the Shemoneh Esrai, because the Navi Yirmiyahu refers to Tisha B'Av as a moed. Kara alai moed lishbor bachurai, "He proclaimed a set time against me, to crush my young men" (Eichah 1:15). On a festival, we do not recite Tachanun.

Let us understand what Chazal are saying. Tisha B'Av, our national day of mourning, is clearly a sad day. Why is it called a festival? It is a day during which our most mind-numbing tragedies have occurred. What essential characteristic of Tisha B'Av allows it to be called a moed? Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, cites the Telshe Rav, Horav Avraham Yitzchak Bloch, zl, who presents us with a deeper understanding of the concept of moed in the context of Jewish law. He explains that moed is derived from vaad, which means meeting. Moed is the time when we "meet" with Hashem. The aim of a festival is to reach a clear recognition of Hashem, so that we can perceive our meeting with Him. Various perspectives allow us to develop this sense of recognition.

By recalling the many miracles and wonders which occurred, up to and including the Exodus from Egypt, we encounter Hashem's Providence through the medium of joy and happiness. We exalt in our liberation and in the multifaceted ways that Hashem has brought us to this point. The joy inherent in the celebration of Pesach brings us to a deeper understanding of Hashem's constant supervision over our lives. We feel a similar emotion on Succos and Shavuos.

It is not only joy which catalyzes our recognition of Hashem's Providence. We can also experience Hashem's Presence amid pain, sorrow and destruction. When we are worthy, Hashem reveals Himself through the medium of joy. During times in which our sins have overwhelmed the opportunity for joy, destruction brings about His appearance. Indeed, a child recognizes his father at all times: when he is being rewarded; and, likewise, when he is being punished. Through the pain which we sustain on Tisha B'Av, as we recall the devastation and sorrow that occurred then and which we relive today, we perceive Hashem with such clarity that the day becomes a moed, a day of meeting between Hashem and His children. Once we reach this level of recognition, we have "met" with Hashem, and we no longer have any room left for anguish. How can one be miserable when he is in Hashem's Presence? This is why we do not say Tachanun.

Rav Gifter applies this idea to explain a statement of Chazal found in Meseches Taanis 29A: "K'shem, just as when (the month of) Av enters, we decrease in joy, so too, when (the month of) Adar enters, we increase with joy." The term k'shem, just as, indicates a comparison, a similarity between two things. What is the correlation between the decrease of joy in Av and its increase in Adar?

As explained above, joy and sorrow are both channels for perceiving Hashem's Presence in our lives. Thus, just as when the month of Av begins, we prepare for our meeting with Hashem through a decrease in joy. Likewise, when the month of Adar commences, we increase in joy to encounter Hashem through another perspective. Joy and sorrow are media which differ in their forms of expression. Their purpose, however, is the same: to enable us to meet with Hashem.

These are the appointed festivals of Hashem, the holy convocations, which you shall designate in their appropriate time. (23:4)

In this country, as well as in much of the world, the pursuit of fun is one of the greatest freedoms and noblest goals of man. People view fun as an escape from the shackles of life's challenges and responsibilities. After all, everybody has to take a vacation from life. The Torah's concept of "fun" or, as we refer to it, simchah, joy, is "somewhat" different. We view simchah as an intensification of life's most sublime features. Simchah is the result of man's realization that he has in some way achieved closeness with the Almighty. It is the soul's elevation, as it feels itself to be in the Presence of Hashem. When one realizes that he is not alone in the world - Hashem is with him - he is filled with simchah.

One reaches the epitome of simchah during the Shalosh Regalim, Three Festivals. It is at this time the Jew ascends to the Bais Hamikdash to "be seen by Hashem." He is there to partake of and enjoy the spirit of holiness that permeates the environment, as man comes in "contact" with the Shechinah. Simchah is not an escape from the reality of danger, illness of adversity. Simchah is an appreciation that whatever stands in our way, Hashem always sustains us through the experience. We understand and feel that, with Hashem at our side, we can triumph over evil by elevating ourselves spiritually to the point that the evil has no effect on us. This is simchah. In fact, each festival has its own unique character, its own special message, and its own source of joy.

The Sefas Emes notes that the parashah that addresses the Shalosh Regalim is juxtaposed upon the preceding mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem, Sanctification of Hashem's Name. Chazal interpret V'nikdashti b'soch Bnei Yisrael, "And I shall be sanctified amongst Bnei Yisrael" (Vayikra 22:32), to mean that a Jew must give up his life in martyrdom rather than violate the three cardinal sins of murder, idolatry and immorality. According to the Sfas Emes, the major festivals, Pesach, Shavuos, and Succos, underscore the principles for which these three violations impose martyrdom upon us.

We live in a world in which homicide is measured in millions; in which despots control countries, who at a whim wipe out entire towns and villages to satisfy their lust for power and blood. The guidelines of respect for human life and dignity have long been shattered by cruel dictators and their puppy governments. The destruction of Jewish life and culture of pre World War II Europe is measured in millions, as is every tragedy that destroys another part of humanity. Life has become cheap; people have become numbers.

This is how it was long ago in Egypt when a cruel Pharaoh brutalized the Jews, persecuting them and tossing their babies into the Nile - without a second thought. Man was worthless, a commodity to be used and then discarded. Jewish doctrine venerates life and enjoins the individual to relinquish his own life if he is otherwise compelled to take the life of another. Given the potential of a human life, homicide is an unpardonable sin. This concept is celebrated on Pesach when we acknowledge and recall our liberation from a land in which human lives were valueless, and men were slaves to manipulate and use according to the "master's" whim. We celebrate the value of life and the potential of each human being. We appreciate the extraordinary value of life in a world that has little respect for it. This is a holiday in which the "fun" aspect is an appreciation of who we are and what this means, a sense of joy in being part of a nation which holds dear every second of human existence.

Morality is the second cardinal principle which one may not violate, even under the pain of death. A nation that respects its inherent sacredness will, likewise, revere G-d. This concept is affirmed through the observance of the festival of Succos, a holiday that emphasizes the significance of the Jewish home. An act of immorality is an affront on the family unit, which is the basis of the home. When parents stray, they indicate that there is no love in the family - no love for each other - no love for their children. They might cite all kinds of excuses to validate their wanton acts of licentiousness, but, after all is said and done, they do not think of each other or their children. They care only about themselves.

On Succos, we celebrate our liberation from Egypt, the land of lust and debauchery, in which incest and degeneracy were an accepted way of life. For forty years after the Exodus from Egypt, we lived in succos, temporary booths. In these succos we learned to live with each family unit standing for itself, as part of a community, each individual family protecting and holding sacred the wholesomeness and integrity of its home. During the festival of Succos, we raise up high the banner of tznius, privacy/chastity, demonstrating to the world that we will protect our family unit by not permitting the moral degeneration that has permeated the world environment to penetrate our homes. We take extreme joy in the knowledge that in a world society that has become morally bankrupt, in which obscenity and hedonism have become legal; in which leaders of the free world are respected despite their moral failings; in which literature and art have been redefined in accordance with the profligate values of society - we are different!

Last, is the prohibition against idol worship, which coincides with none other than the festival of Shavuot, a holiday which celebrates the Giving of the Torah amid a Revelation of G-d's Glory unparalleled in the history of mankind. We celebrate our entrance into a relationship with the Divine. We are filled with joy that in a world which has rejected the voice of G-d, we not only follow His instructions, but we seek to hear His messages as they are constantly conveyed to us. Hashem speaks to us through the Torah which we have accepted, as we continue to live the life in conformance with His prescription for life. Can there be a greater and more sublime form of joy?

Yes, Jewish joy is far different from the secular definition of fun. Our festivals demonstrate that joy emanates from the knowledge that we can confront the moral and spiritual adversities of life - and triumph over them. How fortunate are we to be able to realize, appreciate and practice such an honorable form of simchah.

The name of his mother was Shlomis bas Divri of the tribe of Dan. (24:11)

As the Torah relates the incident of the blasphemer, addressing human failure at its nadir, it points out-- as if to emphasize-- his maternal lineage. His mother was Shlomis bas Divri, a woman of questionable repute. By taking special pains to mention his mother by name, the Torah is implying that she played a role in her son's spiritual demise. Throughout Jewish literature there is no end to the praise showered on Jewish mothers for their vital contribution in raising the next generation. A noteworthy tradition is transmitted concerning the Ramban. Shortly before he was exiled by James I from Spain, he informed his students that they would know of his death by a special sign. On that day there would appear on the tombstone over his mother's grave the image of a lit menorah. He meant to imply that, at this point, he would be reunited with his mother, to whom he attributed all of his enlightenment and education. This follows in the tradition of Rashi, whose mother was credited as being instrumental to his becoming the quintessential rebbe of Klal Yisrael.

Having said this, we must endeavor to understand the reason that a mother/wife has such power to influence both positively and negatively. Chazal teach us that Kimchis was a woman who merited seeing her seven sons become Kohanim Gedolim. When asked what it was that she did to earn such an incredible reward, she replied that the walls of her home never saw her hair exposed. In other words, Kimchis was a tznuah, chaste and private person, who maintained an extremely high level of personal modesty. Tznius is the hallmark of the Jewish woman, and Kimchis reached the zenith of this character trait. This earned her seven sons, each of whom achieved the apex in spirituality.

Let us delve into this idea. Implicit in the creation of womankind was a command that she develop a specific trait of the human personality to its pinnacle - this is the capacity for tznius. There are two aspects to tznius: personal privacy; and bodily privacy. While often these two are connected, in this instance we specifically address the concept of personal privacy.

The concept of tznius, tzena, is mentioned twice in Tanach: in Mishlei 11:2. v'es tznuim chochmah, "Those who are private (in their Torah learning) will achieve wisdom;" and Michah 6:8 mu u'mah Hashem doreish mimcha, ki im asos mishpat, v'ahavas chesed, v'hatznea leches im Hashem Elokecha, "What Hashem demands of you, but to do justice, love kindness, and to walk privately with your G-d." When anyone - man or woman - serves Hashem, he must concentrate on the inner dimensions of his personality. This is tznius: the inner-directed striving which is the essence of the Jewish heroic act. Women are enjoined to take this trait to the maximum. This is symbolized by the mode of their creation. Rather than being

created from dust, Hashem fashioned them from a part of the body which is covered twice - first by skin and then by clothes. As this is not a thesis on tznius, let it suffice to say that throughout Tanach and Chazal, we note that the highest level of spiritual devotion occurs in privacy, as in Lifnai v'Lifnim, inner sanctum, the Holy of Holies, on the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur, by the holiest Jew, the Kohen Gadol. Is it any wonder that the mother of seven Kohanim Gedolim achieved this distinction due to her eminence in taking the trait of tznius to its summit?

Kol kevudah bas melech p'nimah, "The entire glory of the daughter of the king lies on the inside" (Tehillim 45:14). This pasuk underscores much of Judaism's attitude toward the private nature of the role of the Jewish woman. Indeed, Chazal view this from two perspectives: as a statement describing the specific role of women; and as praise for the private nature of the religious experience in general. True achievement is always in the private sphere, in the area hidden from the public eye.

Behind every great man is a great woman that has laid the foundation and offered the support for his rise. The greatest women are often not recognized for their service and contributions, but that is exactly what makes them great. David Hamelech says in Sefer Tehillim 92:13, "A righteous man will flourish like a date palm, like a cedar in the Lebanon he will grow tall." The tzadik, righteous person, will be as fruitful as a date palm and as sturdy in health as a cedar. Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl, explains that the nature of a date palm is unique in that its height is commensurate with its depth. As tall as it grows, its roots likewise bear down into the ground. When one looks at a tall, erect date palm, he knows that its depth and sturdy foundation coincide with its height. The date palm is in effect a dual expression of "tall" - that which is apparent and that which is concealed beneath the ground.

The male tzaddikim are likened to date palms and cedars, because they are tall, sturdy and can be seen from afar. Women have that exact same symbol of gadlus, distinction. They are also like the date palm, but their greatness is concealed through their tznius, hidden from the public eye. Their eminence is noticed by those who look, by those who have a depth of perception that enables them to see the real woman, the p'nimius, inner self, of the woman, because therein lies her sublimity and grandeur.

When we look up at a skyscraper, we marvel at its imposing height, and stand in awe of its magnificent stature. One thing, however, often eludes even the astute spectator: its foundation. The stability of this colossal edifice is provided by a foundation that has been constructed well beneath the pavement. It is as wide as the building and deep enough that, with sufficient reinforcement, the tall skyscraper can withstand the weight and pressure that threaten its permanence. Women are the yesod, foundation of Klal Yisrael. By nature, their critical contribution is covert, hidden from the human eye, similar to the foundation of a skyscraper. Their strength lies in their abilities to: develop their inner selves, through their adherence to the laws governing tznius; and transmit this refined trait to their progeny - something like becoming a modern-day Kimchis.

Al tivtechu b'nedivim, b'ven adam she'ein lo teshuah. Do not rely on nobles, nor on a human being, for he holds no salvation.

The pasuk begins with the word nedivim, nobles in the plural, and ends with ein lo teshuah, "he holds no salvation." Why is there a switch? Horav Daniel Lehrfeld, Shlita, explains that it is a davar pashut, simple thing, that one should not rely on the help of nedivim, nobles. Interestingly, the trop, cantillation sign, beneath the word nedivim, is an esnachta, which is a stop, as if to say, "It goes without saying that the help of nedivim is worthless and unreliable." What about a brother, a dear friend: they are reliable - are they not? This is what the end of the pasuk is addressing. Everyone's brother, his best friend; they are not reliable. Only Hashem. He is the only One to whom we can turn, and hope for a positive response, upon which He will immediately act.

Horav Akiva Eiger, zl, explains this anecdotally. When we are in need of salvation from an illness, an affliction, a persecution, we should not rely on those who feel that the affliction is really not what we think it is. They do not consider this to be bad, as something worthy of the word teshua, salvation. Do not rely on those who view your problem as not much of a problem. The individual who brings about salvation must feel that salvation is necessary. Otherwise, he lacks the sensitivity and proper motivation.

Sponsored by Michele and Marcelo Weiss In honor of the Bar Mitzvah of our B'chor, Elchonon Hertzler n"y י"ג yehi ratzon shenirvu mimenu rov nachas